

## Introduction

The history of philosophy is usually portrayed as a long list of male names, and yet from antiquity women also took up a rational reflection on the world and presented their thoughts in writings. From the beginning of the modern era, many women took an active part in the European philosophical discourse. Women philosophers are a perfect example of how the human mind – the rational spirit, the thinking substance – strives to realize its essential feature despite the obstacles it encounters. Speaking of women philosophers, we must remember about the socio-cultural situation that has been unfavourable to women for centuries, and especially about denying them the right to education. That is why, of course, many women thinkers demanded that women be given education, especially institutional education. The articles in this volume will allow us to look at the life and work of selected women philosophers who lived between the 17th and 19th centuries in Europe: from England, through France, the Venetian Republic, to Polish lands. The texts are both historical-philosophical and interpretive in nature: they contain biographical information, presentations and analyses of the views of women philosophers, but also disputable or even controversial theses. After all, discussions, disputes and freedom of expression are at the heart of philosophy. Therefore, we publish these articles, hoping that they will be relevant for research on women philosophers, become a voice in the discussion and arouse polemics.

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